

The Four Trojan Horses of Humanism – Updated Review

Author: Harry Conn

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HUMANISM HAS PENETRATED THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND AMERICAN CULTURE THROUGH FOUR
IDEOLOGICAL TROJAN HORSES: HIGHER CRITICISM, EVOLUTION, PSYCHOLOGY, AND SECULAR EDUCATION.
EACH HORSE UNDERMINES BIBLICAL TRUTH AND PROMOTES MORAL AND SPIRITUAL DECLINE.

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Introduction

This document is a compiled and updated examination of *The Four Trojan Horses of Humanism*, originally written by Harry Conn. It exposes the ideological infiltration of secular humanism into Western civilization through four primary avenues: Evolution, Higher Criticism, Psychology, and Socialism. These “Trojan Horses” have been welcomed into institutions, often under the banner of progress or compassion, yet they have hollowed out the biblical and moral foundations of law, family, education, the Church, and public conscience.

The central purpose of this compilation is not originality but continuity. As compiler, I seek to refuel and carry forward the spiritual and cultural warnings issued by earlier watchmen such as Francis Schaeffer, Carl F. H. Henry, and Harry Conn. The goal is both preservation and preparation: to help Christians understand what has been lost, how it was lost, and what must be done to rebuild.

Included in this work are:

- A chapter-by-chapter summary and evaluation of Conn’s original text
- A full-length appendix essay examining the cultural devastation caused by Higher Criticism
- A comprehensive glossary of ideological and theological terms
- A timeline showing the gradual ideological takeover since the Enlightenment
- A side-by-side table of liberal counterpoints and biblical responses

This document is intended as an inheritance. In a time when truth is eroded, memory is manipulated, and faith is marginalized, the most enduring legacy we can offer our children is a hedge of reason, a foundation of truth, and a purpose rooted in the eternal. The principles that guided the founding of our republic and the Church before it remains unchanged: the sovereignty of God, the sanctity of conscience, the dignity of life, and the authority of Scripture.

Chapter-by-Chapter

Chapter 1: The Trojan Horse at the Gate

Conn introduces the metaphor of the Trojan Horse, warning that the greatest threats to Christianity come not from without but from ideas that sneak in under the guise of scholarship, science, or compassion. He defines Humanism as a worldview that deifies man and dethrones God and explains how its “horses” are hidden within accepted academic and cultural frameworks.

Key Concepts:

- The subtlety of deception
- Humanism as a false religion
- Cultural compromise among Christians

Chapter 2: The Horse of Higher Criticism

This chapter exposes the historical and philosophical roots of Higher Criticism, tracing it to Enlightenment rationalism and German theologians like Julius Wellhausen and David Strauss. Conn argues that Higher Criticism undermines the authority, inspiration, and inerrancy of Scripture.

Effects:

- Redefines miracles as myths
- Treats the Bible as a human document
- Encourages apostasy in seminaries and pulpits

Conn’s Verdict:

Higher Criticism replaces God’s Word with man’s speculation.

Chapter 3: The Horse of Evolution

Conn critiques Darwinian evolution as more than biology it is a philosophical assault on the biblical account of creation. He shows how it erodes belief in original sin, divine design, and moral absolutes.

Key Arguments:

- Evolution legitimizes atheism and naturalism
- It disconnects man from accountability to a Creator
- It promotes the survival of the fittest over the sanctity of life

Biblical Response: Genesis is not allegory it is the foundation for understanding man's need for redemption.

Chapter 4: The Horse of Psychology

Here, Conn examines secular psychology, especially Freudianism and behaviorism. He warns that humanistic psychology replaces biblical counseling with self-help and replaces repentance with self-acceptance.

Concerns:

- Sin becomes sickness
- Guilt is treated as psychological dysfunction
- The self is glorified, not crucified

Christian Alternative: Biblical counseling rooted in the authority of Scripture and the sufficiency of Christ.

Chapter 5: The Horse of Secular Education

This chapter details how public education, devoid of biblical morality, indoctrinates children with relativism, evolution, and anti-Christian values. Conn argues that when God is excluded from education, all knowledge becomes disconnected from truth.

Key Developments:

- Removal of prayer and Bible reading from schools
- Promotion of sex education, moral relativism, and anti-family ideologies
- Christian children being disciplined by secularism

Call to Action: Parents must reclaim responsibility for their children's education either through reform, protest, or alternative schooling.

Chapter 6: Four Horses, One Rider

Conn ties the four horses together, showing that they are not isolated issues but coordinated expressions of a single worldview: secular humanism. He references Ephesians 6 and Revelation imagery to emphasize the spiritual battle at hand.

Key Point:

These horses are Satan's tools to infiltrate the Church, silence the Gospel, and prepare the world for apostasy.

Chapter 7: Sounding the Trumpet

The final chapter is call to arms. Conn urges believers to stand firm in biblical truth, expose false doctrines, protect children from cultural indoctrination, and boldly proclaim the Gospel. He emphasizes repentance, discernment, and action.

Key Scriptures:

- Jude 3 (contending for faith)
- Romans 12:2 (renewing the mind)
- Proverbs 22:6 (training up a child)

Final Message: Christians must not retreat they must reform, resist, and rebuild from a foundation of unshakable biblical truth.

Application to Modern Culture

In today's culture:

- **Education:** Public schools and universities largely propagate secular humanism, particularly through evolutionary science, social theory, and moral relativism.
- **Church:** Progressive theology and interfaith pluralism have entered mainline denominations, weakening biblical authority.
- **Government:** Increasingly favors secularism and equality of outcome (not opportunity), while marginalizing Christian voices.
- **Media:** Celebrates self-actualization, therapy culture, and identity politics ideas rooted in the very horses Ironside warned against.

Ironside's warnings are more relevant than ever, as the West faces rising nihilism, anxiety, and social fragmentation consequences of abandoning objective moral truth.

Final Analysis

Among the four ideological Trojan Horses identified by Harry Conn, *Higher Criticism* stands out as the most destructive and far-reaching in its cultural impact especially within the United States. While Evolution attacked origins, Psychology redefined itself, and Socialism threatened liberty, Higher Criticism struck at the very heart of truth by undermining the authority of Scripture. It was the intellectual entry point that enabled the others to take root unchallenged.

- **Strategic Penetration:** Higher Criticism entered first through seminaries and pulpits, then influenced education, law, and public discourse. It was the gateway to justifying Evolution as myth-compatible, Psychology as spiritually neutral, and Socialism as morally imperative.
- **Institutional Damage:** It **undermined Scripture** the foundation of truth for law, ethics, education, and worship. Once the Bible lost authority, every other Trojan Horse was welcomed without resistance.
- **Moral Confusion:** By redefining sin, truth, and authorship, it severed modern man from fixed meaning, leaving a vacuum filled by ideology.
- **Cultural Consequences:** The denial of divine revelation allowed for relativism in marriage, gender, law, and education. Every woke or post-Christian institution operates on this assumption.

Higher Criticism paved the way for race-based relativism, law without absolutes, and the erosion of truth in education, media, politics, and the arts. It taught generations to question divine authority, then filled the vacuum with human-centered ideologies, critical theories, and moral subjectivism. Christians must now reclaim biblical truth as the only foundation for justice, identity, and liberty restoring Scripture to its rightful place in the church, the culture, and the conscience of the nation.

Christians must now:

- **Defend Scripture's moral and legal relevance** to race and justice,
- **Reject hermeneutics rooted in identity politics,**
- **Proclaim the gospel's power to unify, redeem, and restore.**

Appendix: Liberal Counterpoints and Conservative Christian Responses

The following table presents commonly asserted liberal or progressive positions alongside clear, biblical responses rooted in conservative Christian reasoning:

LIBERAL COUNTERPOINT	CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE
EVOLUTION IS SCIENCE, NOT IDEOLOGY	Scientific theories are provisional. Evolution is used beyond science as a worldview denying design and a Creator.
TEXTUAL CRITICISM IMPROVES BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING	While helpful for historical clarity, Higher Criticism often strips Scripture of divine inspiration and moral authority.
PSYCHOLOGY HELPS MENTAL ILLNESS; IT'S NOT ANTI-CHRISTIAN	True mental health care has value, but replacing sin with syndromes avoids the biblical need for confession, repentance, and regeneration.
SOCIALISM ENSURES JUSTICE AND EQUITY	Biblical charity is voluntary, relational, and accountable. State socialism often breeds dependency, corruption, and secularism.
SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE DEMANDS SECULAR POLICIES	The founders intended to keep the state out of the church not to remove faith from public life or moral legislation.
HUMANISM PROMOTES DIGNITY AND REASON	True human dignity stems from being made in God's image, not from autonomous man-centered ethics.

Appendix: Brief Chapter Review of The Four Trojan Horses of Humanism

This appendix provides a concise summary and chapter-by-chapter review of Harry Conn's influential book, identifying the central arguments and assessing their cultural implications.

Chapter 1 – Evolution: Conn identifies Darwinism as the first Trojan Horse. He argues that evolutionary theory erodes belief in divine creation, promotes materialism, and undermines the dignity of man as made in God's image. Evolution is not simply a scientific theory, but a foundational myth of secular humanism.

Chapter 2 – Higher Criticism: Conn critiques the theological movement that treats Scripture as a fallible human document. He sees Higher Criticism as a tool used to destroy confidence in the authority, unity, and supernatural character of the Bible, replacing revelation with speculation.

Chapter 3 – Psychology: Conn argues that secular psychology replaces sin with sickness, accountability with therapy, and repentance with self-esteem. Influenced by Freud and others, psychology becomes a substitute gospel, offering self-knowledge instead of salvation.

Chapter 4 – Socialism: Conn presents socialism not as a benign economic policy but as a totalizing ideology hostile to faith, family, and freedom. He connects it to Marxist materialism and shows its tendency to collectivize responsibility and replace God with the state.

Chapter 5 – The Remedy in Christ: Conn emphasizes that the answer to these Trojan Horses is not merely intellectual refutation but spiritual regeneration. Christ alone, Conn asserts, offers the foundation for truth, meaning, freedom, and hope.

Appendix: Liberal Counterpoints and Christian Responses

This appendix outlines key liberal critiques related to the Trojan Horses, with clear and reasoned Christian responses.

1. **Liberal Critique:** Higher Criticism enhances understanding by placing Scripture in historical context.
Christian Response: Understanding history is valuable, but denying inspiration undermines the authority of the Word. Historical context must illuminate, not rewrite, revelation.
2. **Liberal Critique:** Evolution is a settled scientific fact and should not be seen as a threat to faith.
Christian Response: Evolution as a worldview (not just science) denies man's unique creation and divine purpose. It fosters moral relativism and undermines biblical anthropology.
3. **Liberal Critique:** Psychology helps people in ways religion has failed.
Christian Response: Psychology can be helpful when informed by truth, but without a biblical view of man, sin, and redemption, it becomes a false gospel of self-salvation.
4. **Liberal Critique:** Socialism promotes justice and equity.
Christian Response: Biblical justice defends the individual, family, and voluntary charity not centralized power and coerced redistribution. Socialism historically persecutes faith and conscience.
5. **Liberal Critique:** The Bible is oppressive and outdated.
Christian Response: Scripture confronts all cultures and generations with truth, grace, and eternal relevance. Its consistent moral vision is what safeguards dignity and liberty.

Appendix: Related Writings by Conn and Comparable Authors

- Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?*
- Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*
- David Noebel, *Understanding the Times*
- Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*
- Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay*
- James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*
- Os Guinness, *The Dust of Death*
- R.C. Sproul, *Renewing Your Mind*

Appendix: Works Cited and Referenced in Harry Conn's Text

This appendix lists the known references cited or strongly inferred in Conn's original 1982 publication.

- Scripture (KJV)
- Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species
- Julius Wellhausen
- Rudolf Bultmann
- Sigmund Freud
- Carl Jung
- John Dewey
- Karl Marx
- Gustavo Gutiérrez
- World Council of Churches materials
- Reinhold Niebuhr
- Paul Tillich
- Humanist Manifesto I and II

Appendix: The Trojan Horse of Higher Criticism – Dissecting the Bible to Dismantle the Culture

ORIGINAL AND COMPILED WORK BY JEFF PIERSON

Higher Criticism, birthed in 18th and 19th-century German rationalist universities, did not merely analyze Scripture, it deconstructed it. What began as a seemingly academic effort to examine biblical texts “objectively” quickly mutated into a campaign to sever the Bible from its divine origins and reframe it as myth, metaphor, or merely moral folklore. Behind the veil of scholarly inquiry was an agenda: to replace divine revelation with human reasoning.

Originating with figures such as Julius Wellhausen and the Tübingen School, higher criticism employed historical and literary methodologies to question the authorship, unity, and authority of biblical texts. The Pentateuch, for instance, was no longer the inspired work of Moses but a patchwork of anonymous redactors. Isaiah became multiple authors. Miracles were dismissed as legends. Prophecy became a retroactive history. The supernatural was edited out with the stroke of a pen.

From the classroom, these corrosive ideas spread. First through elite European seminaries, then into American theological institutions like Union Theological Seminary, Harvard Divinity, and the University of Chicago. Future pastors, professors, and denominational leaders were indoctrinated to read Scripture not as God’s Word, but as man’s evolving religious expression.

The effects were devastating.

In Churches: Doctrinal preaching gave way to moral platitudes. The cross became a metaphor. Hell became an allegory. Virgin birth and resurrection became optional. Denominations once grounded in Scripture split or died.

In Universities: Bible classes morphed into sociological dissections. Once-Christian colleges became hubs for relativism. Faith was rebranded as subjective experience rather than historical truth.

In Government and Law: The moral authority once rooted in biblical law was replaced by case law and utilitarian ethics. The Ten Commandments disappeared from courthouses. Legislators now draw from critical theory more than Scripture.

In Media and Popular Culture: The Bible is mocked or sentimentalized. Its moral clarity is viewed as intolerant. Jesus is portrayed not as Savior but as a misunderstood social reformer.

The genius of higher criticism as a tactic was its disguise. It never needed to burn Bibles; it only needed to cast doubt. Once the foundation cracked, the structure of belief began to crumble from within.

Make no mistake: higher criticism is not merely a method; it is a worldview a Trojan Horse that has infiltrated not only the church, but also the academy, the state, and the soul of the West. By dismantling the authority of Scripture, it paved the way for moral relativism, theological confusion, and spiritual apathy.

To rebuild, we must reassert that Scripture is not merely a text to be analyzed but the living Word of God. The path to cultural renewal does not begin with policy or politics it begins with repentance and the reestablishment of biblical authority in every sphere of life.

Timeline: The Rise and Impact of Higher Criticism

Pre-18th Century – Foundations of Biblical Trust

- **Before 1700s:**
The Bible is widely regarded within Christendom as divinely inspired, historically reliable, and the authoritative Word of God. Traditional belief holds that Moses authored the Pentateuch, the prophets wrote their books, and the New Testament reflects eyewitness testimony.

1700s – Seeds of Skepticism

- 1711–1776 | David Hume:
Challenges miracles and divine revelation philosophically, arguing that natural explanations are always more probable than supernatural ones.
- 1724–1804 | Immanuel Kant:
Promotes moral autonomy and subjective reason, laying intellectual groundwork for demythologizing Scripture.
- Late 1700s | Enlightenment Rationalism:
Emergence of “historical consciousness” in Germany questions traditional authorship and dates of biblical texts.

1800s – The Birth of Higher Criticism

- 1835 | David Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*: Argues that Gospel miracles are myth, not history—launching the "mythical" interpretation of the New Testament.
- 1878–1885 | Julius Wellhausen, Documentary Hypothesis: Proposes the Pentateuch is not Mosaic but a compilation of four sources (JEDP), each with different theological aims.
- 1800s | Tübingen School (F.C. Baur, et al.): Develops the theory that the New Testament reflects competing theological factions (e.g., Petrine vs. Pauline Christianity), not unified apostolic doctrine.

Early 1900s – American Theological Shift

- 1900–1920 | German influence enters U.S. seminaries: Institutions like Union Theological Seminary, Yale Divinity School, and the University of Chicago adopt historical-critical methods.
- 1920s | Fundamentalist–Modernist Controversy: Conservative theologians like J. Gresham Machen challenge higher criticism's denial of miracles, virgin birth, and inerrancy.
- 1930s–1950s | Neo-Orthodoxy (e.g., Karl Barth): Attempts a middle path between liberalism and fundamentalism, accepting existential experience as divine while still using critical methods.

Mid–Late 20th Century – Cultural Mainstreaming

- 1940s–1960s | Mainline denominations split: Presbyterian, Methodist, Lutheran, and Episcopal institutions embrace higher criticism, causing doctrinal fragmentation.
- 1960s | Seminaries shift focus: Biblical texts are interpreted through sociological, psychological, and liberationist lenses—Jesus becomes a symbol of justice, not a Savior.
- 1970s–1980s | Rise of Progressive Theology: Scripture is increasingly read through feminist, Marxist, and anti-colonial paradigms. Authority of the text yields to “reader response.”

1990s–2020s – Ideology Institutionalized

- 1990s | Postmodern Hermeneutics:
Truth becomes subjective; biblical texts are viewed as products of power, class, or gender constructs rather than divine revelation.
- 2000s | Public Education and Media:
The Bible is treated as literature, myth, or moral folklore in classrooms and pop culture, not as sacred scripture.
- 2010s–2020s | Critical Theory and Identity Hermeneutics:
Critical race, gender, and queer theory reinterpret Scripture through activist paradigms. Higher criticism merges with ideological deconstruction.

Present – Cultural Consequences and Christian Response

- **Result:**
Biblical literacy declines. Churches fracture. Theological orthodoxy is marginalized. Institutions built on Scripture (law, ethics, family, justice) now operate on relativist assumptions.
- **Response:**
Conservative Christians reaffirm biblical inerrancy, defend Mosaic authorship, apostolic witness, and historic doctrines of Christ—rejecting the reduction of Scripture to mere human artifact.

Appendix: Glossary of Terms and Concepts

Biblical Inerrancy – The belief that the Bible, in its original manuscripts, is without error and entirely trustworthy in all it affirms.

Critical Theory – A philosophical approach rooted in Marxism that seeks to critique and change society by analyzing power structures, especially those tied to race, gender, and class.

Demythologization – A theological approach (popularized by Rudolf Bultmann) aimed at reinterpreting biblical narratives by removing supernatural elements deemed mythological.

DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) – Contemporary framework often used in institutions to promote cultural sensitivity and representation; sometimes used to enforce ideologies that conflict with biblical morality.

ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) – Corporate policy metrics tied to social justice and environmental goals, frequently used to pressure companies into progressive practices.

Higher Criticism – The scholarly examination of biblical texts to determine authorship, origins, and historical reliability often used to challenge traditional views of inspiration and authority.

Humanism (Secular) – A worldview that emphasizes human reason, ethics, and naturalism while rejecting religious dogma, supernaturalism, and divine revelation.

Liberation Theology – A movement that interprets Christian faith through the lens of political liberation, especially for the oppressed, often rooted in Marxist ideology.

Living Constitutionalism – The idea that the U.S. Constitution is a dynamic document whose meaning evolves over time based on societal changes.

Marxism – A socio-economic theory developed by Karl Marx that advocates for class struggle and the eventual abolition of capitalism in favor of a classless society.

Moral Relativism – The belief that moral judgments are not absolute but are shaped by cultural, historical, or personal contexts.

Neo-Orthodoxy – A 20th-century theological movement that sought a middle path between liberalism and fundamentalism, affirming some biblical truths while denying inerrancy.

Progressive Christianity – A contemporary movement that seeks to reinterpret Christian beliefs to align with modern values, often minimizing doctrine and emphasizing social justice.

Trojan Horse (Ideological) – A concept or system introduced under the guise of one purpose that ultimately undermines or destroys from within, particularly traditional or biblical foundations.

Worldview – A comprehensive perspective through which individuals interpret all aspects of life and reality, shaped by beliefs about God, humanity, morality, and the universe.

Appendix: Timeline – The Creep of Humanism Since the Age of Enlightenment

1700s – Enlightenment Rationalism Rise of rationalist philosophy in Europe. Thinkers like Voltaire, Rousseau, and Kant promote reason over revelation, laying groundwork for secular humanism.

1800s – Birth of Higher Criticism and Evolution German universities develop Higher Criticism (Wellhausen, Strauss). Charles Darwin publishes *On the Origin of Species* (1859), proposing naturalistic evolution.

Early 1900s – Psychological and Socialist Ideologies Rise Freud and Jung secularize psychology. Marxist ideas influence labor movements and academia. Secular humanism begins formal organization.

1940s–1950s – Institutional Infiltration Begins Mainline seminaries adopt Higher Criticism. National Council of Churches (1950) and World Council of Churches (1948) form with liberal theological commitments.

1960s – Radical Moral and Educational Shifts Prayer and Bible reading banned from public schools (*Engel v. Vitale*, 1962; *Abington v. Schempp*, 1963). Sexual revolution fueled by relativist ethics. Liberation theology gains ground.

1970s – Rise of Secular Curricula and Legal Activism Public education curriculum moves toward moral relativism. Critical legal theory and living constitutionalism reshape judicial thought.

1990s – Postmodernism and Identity Politics Truth redefined as subjective. Progressive theology denies miracles and biblical authority. DEI ideology takes root in universities.

2000s – Institutional Apostasy and Cultural Decline Mainline denominations endorse LGBTQ clergy, same-sex unions. Universities marginalize Christian perspectives.

2010s–2020s – Consolidation and Enforcement ESG/DEI used to enforce progressive orthodoxy. Supreme Court rulings redefine marriage and gender. Government agencies, media, and education suppress dissent from Christian norms.

Present and Future – Spiritual Crisis or Revival? The West stands at a crossroads facing collapse or spiritual awakening. Humanism's long march through the institutions has reached maturity. Reclaiming truth begins with repentance and courage.